

RED WIZARD ENCOUNTERS

CARNIVAL OF FUN

Not every encounter has to be doom and gloom. Even the most seasoned adventurers enjoy a little downtime. Today we present you just such an evening. Something that sparks joy in many people are their memories of carnivals. Children sometimes get lost in the magic of these events, but what if the magic was real? What if the games were run by fey? This is what we explore in today's encounter.

This encounter isn't really designed for any specific level, rather these games can be attempted by almost any character.

BACKGROUND

The Carnival of Fun is a long talked about phenomenon that many believe to be purely legend. Only the oldest of each community swear to have seen it themselves. This legendary troupe roams the land, bringing their unique brand of fun to the fore, entertaining people of all ages and races with their dazzling magics and mischievous brand of entertainment. It is often said that one should pay close attention to their coin purse at the Carnival, not for fear of it getting stolen but for something untoward being placed inside it, ready to startle the unsuspecting victim.

ENCOUNTER

As the characters approach, read or paraphrase the following:

"The sounds of music being played on multitudinous instruments fills the air, playing songs and making sounds you've never heard before. The smells of roasted fruits and dried meats tantalises your tastebuds and you see the most colourful collection of humanoids you've ever seen. Each attendant of the faire is some form of fey, from satyrs to pixies, dryads to eladrin.

Each tent is decorated with a unique aesthetic and crowds are gathered around each one, utterly enthralled by the displays, games or tests of skill that are on show. As you walk further into the carnival, a swirling purple mist of sparkling energy fills the air, coloured lights flashing all throughout. Even the dourest of people seem to be enjoying themselves as though a child once more."

Welcome to the Carnival of Fun, a testing ground for the skills of the mortal races against the mystical and mischievous fey. Each tent or caravan presents a new experience for the PC's, many allowing each of them to test their skills in various manners. As stated below, the currency of the carnival is tokens. If the PC's wish to purchase entry tokens, they cost 1 SP each. The entry tokens are ornately decorated with embellishments of the forest that glitter green. The prize tokens they receive in return for winning the games have a small boxed present with a bow on top, which glitter purple. Entry tokens can't be directly exchanged for prize tokens, however unused entry tokens can be refunded at the prize tent for 1 SP each.

1. Announcer's Wagon

This simply adorned wagon seems to have little purpose other than to host a well-dressed satyr named Osith whose job appears to be to grab the attention of the passers-by, in case the carnival itself was not capable enough of achieving this goal. Around the wagon dances a young Tiefling girl who is entirely entranced by the music coming from further in, waving around and beating her tambourine as she does so, barely even looking where she is going. Her light, flowing robes follow her in a pattern that almost looks spectral, the thin gossamer material adding to this illusion. By the entrance you see a sign standing proud, proclaiming a welcome to the 'Carnival of Fun' and that all who enter should abandon their cares if only for a little while. It also mentions that the only currency accepted inside the carnival are tokens obtained from the prize tent in the centre of the faire.

2. Magical Beast

Behind an invisible wall of force paces a rather large creature, the likes of which you've not seen before. It paces back and forth on its six thick legs, long fur rippling across its body. Its feline like features extend into two exceptionally long ears that almost resemble antennae, which flop lazily around. As the beast shakes its body, the colours of its fur ripple with it, changing as it comes to settle once more. The colour change is quite significant, ranging from vibrant blue to verdant green, deep crimson to the yellow of sunflowers.

3. Fortune Teller's Caravan

This caravan reeks of incense even before you enter it. Above the door is a simple carved sign that reads 'Madame Saban'. Once you walk inside, the haze of smoke sits thick at the top of the arched roof. The confined space is littered with oddities, curios, baubles and decorations. Across from the small table in front of you is what appears to be a woman, silent and stoic, though the sheer weight of the wrinkles makes it hard to be certain. In the centre of the small table is a deck of cards.

Madame Saban is a Tarokka reader. Her services cost 3 tokens per reading and she may be able to tell the PC's a snapshot of their future. This may be a convenient way to reveal some upcoming information to them.

4. Storage Cart

This heavily laden cart appears to be covered with boxes, crates and barrels of all shapes and sizes, some bare, rough wood, while others are delicately lined with leather. In front of them stands a surly looking Eladrin, dressed in fiery reds and golden yellows. If you approach, he watches you closely until you stray too close, when he simply snarls at you until you move on. It is possible to hide some items or your treasure for your players in this pile, making the challenge one or more high DC Dexterity (Stealth) checks (at least 18) to obtain them without the guard noticing. For the most part however, these boxes and crates are empty, their usual contents on display around the carnival.

5. Bare Knuckle Boxing

A large patch of loose dirt has been scattered over the ground, rounded by a rope ring. People of all walks of life have huddled around to see the events being played out in this tent. Two burly men, one a tiefling and the other a human, trade blow after blow as they send sweat flying into

the crowd. After a well-placed shot, the human goes limp and falls to the ground. The crowd roars with excitement and a pixie flies over to the unconscious body of the human fighter and casts a spell on him, reviving him to his senses. The Tiefling engages the crowd, urging any other fighters to try their luck in the ring.

This is a straight up fist fight, the first to 0 HP loses. Treat the Tiefling fighter as having an AC of 13, +5 attack bonus, dealing 1d6+3 bludgeoning damage and can make a second attack with his bonus action, though the damage for this attack is only 1d6 bludgeoning. This event costs 3 tokens to enter. If the combatant wins, they collect 3 prize tokens to exchange at the prize tent.

6. Guess the Colour

This tent is walled on three sides with a table in the centre. On the table is a pedestal, on which rests a small pile of fur. The attendant, a Grig that goes by Wesley, allows people to make their guess then zaps the fur with a small amount of electricity. Beside the table is a small panel that lists all the different possible colours. As it changes colour each time, a chorus of cheers and boos rise above the standard noise of the carnival.

Any PC's with the nature skill can attempt a check (DC 15) to determine that the fur is from the same type of creature locked in the enclosure (no. 2). If they spend a minute studying the creature and watching its pattern of change, roll the dice twice to increase their chance of guessing the colour. Each guess will cost 1 token and must be placed on the corresponding colour on the table in front of the ball of fur. Only 3 can attempt to guess at a time. When the colour changes, roll on the table below to determine what colour it changes into. If they guess correctly, they gain 1 prize token.

d8 Colour

- 1 Red
- 2 Green
- 3 Blue
- 4 Yellow
- 5 Brown
- 6 Ice White
- 7 Purple
- 8 Orange



7. Three Cups

A small Tiefling girl who tells you her name is Neira sits on the ground before a low table, three cups and a single ball adorning the simple display. Her cute nature and seemingly naïve banter draw numerous people in to attempt her challenge, before they stare at her hands, entirely stunned by the speed and dexterity of the young demon.

To follow Neira's hands, the PC's can either use sheer luck or their keen eyesight. To try and

follow the ball is a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. If they intend to rely solely on luck, have them roll a d20. On a 17 or higher, they stumble across the ball by accident. Each attempt costs 1 token and each correct guess wins 1 prize token.

8. Arm Wrestling Contest

A sturdy table stands as the centrepiece to this tent, with a small crowd gathered around it. On one side stands a tall Eladrin, autumnal colours showing through with burnt reds and muted yellows. He is calling all challengers to try their mettle against his.

This is a simple enough challenge, requiring the victor to consecutively roll two successful opposed Strength (Athletics) checks. The Eladrin opponent has a +5 to this roll. This event costs 1 token and each victory awards 1 prize token.

9. Drinking Contest

This larger tent has all of its sides open with a long table spanning its length. Across it are scattered numerous mugs, all empty. The cacophonous laughter coming from this tent is almost enough to drown out the music. Moving in and out of the crowd is a slender nymph carrying a tray of tankards, taking them all to a moderately sized barrel to be refilled. Regardless how many drinks she fills from this barrel, it never seems to empty. Sitting in the centre of the table is a Fey-touched gnome that goes by Fizzbang, whose eyes are pure white and his hair sparks with the occasional jolt of magical energy. When the contest concludes, the nymph makes her way to the gnome and casts a spell on him, causing him to sit bolt upright, eyes clear and speech steady, ready to drink again.

The nymph is casting a simplified Cure Poison spell on the gnome, curing him of the alcohol in his system. She does not do this for any of the challengers. The contest for this is a simple best of three mechanic with opposed Constitution saving throws. Whoever gets the higher roll gets a point, with the most points at the end winning the game. The gnome makes these roles with a +6 bonus. This event only costs 1 token to attempt but awards 2 prize tokens if you succeed.

10. Baldur's Bones

This tent is completely walled in, with dancing lights swirling about in the air above the table. A small table sits in the centre of this space, decorated with a well embroidered tablecloth. Around the table sit 6 chairs with a set of dice laid before each, a charismatic Selkie sitting at the head of the table ushering all comers in, smoking a uniquely scented cigar that you can't quite place. In the corner sits a small box that emanates slow music as though a string quartet were right outside.

This game is simply Baldur's Bones as described in Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus. The buy in is 5 tokens, though any tokens made through betting on these dice can be exchanged for an equivalent number of prize tokens.

11. Painter's Tent

A flamboyantly dressed wood elf sits in front of an easel, paintbrush floating magically in front of the canvas, simply waiting for instruction. As the artist sets about directing it, the paintbrush flies faster than the eye can properly follow, never touching the vibrant array of paints sitting beside the frame.

Anybody can get their picture painted for 3 tokens here, giving them a very artistic

representation of themselves. This can be a faithful representation or a caricature, or even a stylised version, but the brush will only paint some form of portrait of the person sitting on the stool. Each portrait takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.

12. Prize Tent

This tent is richly adorned with all manner of prizes, trinkets and oddities. The are shelves of children's dolls, piles of flowers of all colours and shapes, interesting doodads heaped onto the cabinet at the back, even a small rack of seemingly very ornate clothing hanging off to the side. Right in the centre, closely guarded by the older goblin standing there, is a small hole completely devoid of light. When enough tokens are presented the surly greenskin, known as Krank, reaches into the hole and withdraws another prize, though this is nicer and better constructed than the rest.

This is where the PC's can redeem all the prize tokens they've been collecting. This is also where they can purchase more tokens if they run out. The hole in the centre of the display is a portable hole and is where the most valuable and interesting prizes are kept. See the table below for exactly what prizes are on offer.

13. Challenge of the Sphinx

The walls of this tent are closed in, with glowing arcane runes floating through the air around the table that sits in the centre. Across from the entrance sits a young Sphinx, who stares at you somewhat indifferently, as she invites you in to attempt her puzzles and try to win the tokens on offer. On the table in front of you are three puzzles, each more complex than the next.

There are three puzzles that the PC's can attempt in this room, each with increasing DC's and prize tokens. Each puzzle requires an Intelligence check, though if they spend a moment studying the arcane sigils that surround them and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check, they can grant themselves advantage on their roll to solve the puzzle. These runes are mostly gibberish, random symbols placed for the aesthetic. A few of them have meaning however, providing small clues as to the designs of the puzzles. For a more immersive experience for your players, perhaps consider giving them physical puzzles to be able to solve with their own hands, though this may not be feasible for all situations. The simplest puzzle requires a DC 15 Intelligence check and grants a single token, while the DC for the middle puzzle is 17 and grants 2 tokens. The most challenging puzzle, the sphinx explains, she designed herself and is quite proud of. The DC required to solve this one is 22, but it grants 5 tokens to the successful PC, as well as a special prize, given that no one has opened it in years. Inside the puzzle itself is a small polished wooden box, which houses an ornately illustrated deck of cards. This is a Deck of Illusions that is completely full, all 34 cards still present.

14. Three-Dragon Ante

This tent is dedicated to the game played across Faerun: Three-Dragon Ante. A slightly smaller table takes centre place of this tent, with a hole in the centre into which the cards are being funnelled as you enter, only to be spat back out as a shuffled deck once more. A high elf sits across from the entrance and introduces himself as Ilthurn. He runs the table and sits in on each game to ensure that all of the other players are following the rules. In the corner is Ilthurn's attendant, standing still holding a small tray bearing an ornate crystal goblet and a decanter of some dark purple wine.

This tent gives the PC's a chance to play Three-Dragon Ante to attempt to win even more tokens or prize tokens. The buy in is 10 tokens and any token won at the table can be exchanged for a prize token on a one for one basis. If you don't have a set of the appropriate cards, you can simply tell the PC's that the table is currently full.

15. Pie Eating Contest

This larger caravan has had its sides removed to allow more spectators and participants. The crowd for this is starting to build, as it only runs a handful of times during the night. There are a number of contestants already taking their seats at the long table currently, though there appears to be room left for two more. There is a diminutive man that seems to be in charge, standing about two feet tall, wearing a rather formal looking jacket jumping around on legs that resemble a crickets. He's hopping backwards and forwards checking that everybody is ready. As the last person sits, a tray full of pies, each no bigger than your hand, appears on the table in front of you.

This contest has two parts: firstly, how many pies can the contestants consume, and secondly, can they keep them down? There are three other competitors at this table, each with an increasing modifier of +2, +4 and +6. For this game, have the players roll a d6 and add their Constitution modifier. This will determine how many pies they can consume in the time allotted. To keep them down, it is a Constitution saving throw equal to 10 + the number of pies eaten. The more they eat, the harder it will be to keep them down. If they fail to keep their dinner down, they forfeit the contest. This contest only happens a few times each night, with about an hour between. As such, the reward for winning is 5 tokens, with the runner up getting 2.

16. Axe Throwing

Two lanes of very worn carpet, each flanked by white stakes, end in an ornately decorated target. A pleasant enough pixie runs this game, named Flax, and challenges anyone walking by to test their throwing arm.



A DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check will tell you that these axes are weighted poorly and will fly off-centre. Anyone that succeeds on this check gets a +2 bonus to their ranged attack rolls. There are varying DC's for this target, starting at 15 for a single prize token, 17 for 2 tokens and a bullseye for 3 tokens, which is a DC 20. This game costs 2 tokens to enter.

17. Dancer and Music

In this tent is a small stage, on which an unbelievably attractive female Eladrin is performing a very elaborate dance. Her green appearance is punctuated by more colours than most have seen in one place, with blooms and blossoms appearing all over her clothes. As she dances to and fro, small leaves and petals lift off and flutter in the breeze, becoming a part of the dance itself. The music is a lively jig, played on a violin, hand drum and pan pipes, each magically enchanted to play the tune without a player. The instruments slowly circle around the dancer, who never stops moving. The crowd watching is utterly entranced, filled mostly with men, however a few women and genderless patrons also looking on.

This is not a game or contest, but the bewitching nature of this dance is not entirely intangible. For every PC that watches for more than a few seconds, have them roll a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. Male PC's or PC's that are attracted to females make this roll with disadvantage. If they fail this save, they succumb to the magic of the dance and are charmed, unable to stop watching. If they are left watching this way until the dancer's performance ends, they are affected by a charm spell that completely infatuates them with the dancer. This secondary effect lasts 1d4 hours. If the PC is interrupted from their reverie before the dance is completed, they can attempt the saving throw again with advantage (this ignores the disadvantage from the previous roll).

The following is a list of prizes available to the PC's, separated by the number of tokens required. If they wish to hand over 15 tokens in one transaction, they can claim one of the special prizes, chosen at random. The same person can't take more than one special prize and each special prize is unique, meaning that once it has been drawn, it can't be drawn again.

1 token:

Abacus, quilted blanket, wooden toy snake, medallion bearing the symbol of Correllon Larethian, large stuffed animals (dog, cat, bird, tiger, sphinx), bouquet of colourful flowers

2 tokens:

Rusty battleaxe, large scented candle (lavender, sage or strawberry), magnifying glass, long-stem smoking pipe, delicately knitted doll

3 tokens:

Campfire and honey scented perfume, boomerang, hooded lantern that shines green, large quartz crystal, bagpipes

4 tokens:

Handheld mirror set in wood, zulkoon, star rose quartz necklace, Heward's Handy Spice Pouch, embroidered waistcoat

5 tokens:

Clockwork amulet, cloak of billowing, pipe of smoke monsters, lute of illusions, talking doll

Special prizes:

D8 Item

1. Vest made from Pride Silk
2. Decanter of Endless Water
3. Grey Bag of Tricks
4. Periapt of Health
5. Sending Stones (pair)
6. Ring of Water Walking
7. Keoghtom's Ointment
8. Headband of Intellect

